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ABSTRACT

A summary of the 1989 legislative and administrative changes made by the Australian Commonwealth government in social security and community services, employment, education, family law, immigration, housing and health is presented in this document. A 17-item bibliography and list of acronyms also are included. (DB)

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1989

Diary of Social Legislation and Policy

A co-operative publishing project of the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the Social Policy Research Centre

National Institute of
Economic and Industry Research

Australian Institute of
Family Studies

Social Policy Research Centre

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Introduction

This Diary summarises the legislative and administrative changes made in the social policy field by the Commonwealth Government during 1989. It provides a ready reference for research workers, and can also be used as a succinct and factual account of policy during the year. The chief sources of information for entries are departmental press releases, annual reports, the Budget Papers and Budget Related Papers for the year.

The Diary follows the format of the 'diaries' prepared by Helen Ferber of the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and published in R.B. Scotton and Helen Ferber (Eds), *Public Expenditure and Social Policy in Australia* (2 volumes, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1978 and 1980). These two volumes covered the years 1972 to 1978. Events for the calendar year 1979 were recorded in supplements in the first three issues of the present series. For references to general economic policy or political events the reader is referred to the 'Diary of Recent Economic Events and Policy Statements' included in each issue of the *Australian Economic Review*, and to the 'Political Review' in each issue of the *Australian Quarterly*.

The first *Diary* in the present series covered events for the calendar year 1980. Subsequent editions have been published for the years 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985–86, and 1986–87, copies of which can be obtained from the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the Social Policy Research Centre.

To maintain consistency with earlier *Diary* editions topics of focus for this edition have been selected from a number of Commonwealth portfolios: Social Security (Department of Social Security); Community Services, Health, and Housing (Department of Community Services and Health); Employment and Training, and Education (Department of Employment, Education and Training); and, Immigration (Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs).

Editing and book production of this issue were the responsibility of Deborah Whithear and Allyson Trainor of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Individual contributions from members of the three research institutes and for the first time, from the Bureau of Immigration Research, are gratefully acknowledged.

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Social Security — 1989

Compiled by Diana Encel
Social Policy Research Centre

Family Allowance and Family Allowance Supplement

1 January 1989: As announced in the May 1988 Economic Statement, Family Allowance Supplement (FAS) payments became subject to an assets test from this date. FAS entitlement in respect of any child who has eligible taxable income in excess of the tax free threshold ceased. The child continues to be counted in assessing allowable income for FAS purposes. Allowable income is now indexed.

12 April 1989: It was announced in the April Economic Statement that Family Allowance rates will increase to $9 per week for each of the first 3 children and $12 per week for each additional child from July 1989. The institutional rate will be $12. FAS rates will increase for 13–15 year olds to $34.10. It was also announced that the Family Allowance rate will be indexed for the Consumer Price Index December 1988–June 1989, from January 1990. Each January thereafter it will be indexed in line with the Consumer Price Index for the previous year. The 1989 threshold for receiving maximum payments is $53 550 for one child and an additional $2678 for each further child. Family Allowance will not be paid for children under 16 in full-time jobs from January 1990.

18 May 1989: From this date, payment of Family Allowance ceases once a parent or child has been temporarily overseas for three years. Payment will not be restored unless both the parent and child return to Australia, lodge a claim and then meet the usual conditions of eligibility.

1 July 1989: If the income of a Family Allowance recipient is 25 per cent less than income in the previous financial year, that person's rate of family allowance can be reassessed on the basis of current income.

15 August 1989: The 1989–1990 Budget made changes to the conditions of eligibility for FAS. From December 1989 FAS will become payable if the family's income has not dropped by 25 per cent but is likely to be below the FAS income threshold in the current financial year. From January 1990, families receiving FAS under the 25 per cent reduction rule will retain their current entitlement where this would make them better off than under an assessment according to their taxable income for 1988–89.

From December 1989 parents receiving Austudy or similar payments, who do not qualify for FAS for their children because of the FAS income test, will be paid FAS at the maximum rate, subject to the FAS assets test.

From January 1990 a lump sum bereavement payment will be made to families, including sole parents, upon the death of a child for whom additional pension or benefit or FAS was payable.

From October 1989 a sample review will be undertaken of Family Allowance recipients, to verify taxable income.

From November 1989 parents of children who receive a formal training allowance will no longer be eligible for family payments for those children.

From January 1990 eligibility for Family Allowance, FAS and additional pension or benefit will cease on the sixteenth birthday of a student child except where the child is not entitled to Austudy or another prescribed education scheme payment.

Improved advice will be provided to parents of students about to turn 16, about Austudy benefits and application requirements.

Services for Children

1 January 1989: Responsibility for the income assessment of applicants for child care fee relief was passed from the Department of Community Services and Health to the Department of Social Security.

13 December 1989: The Prime Minister has announced a special Federal–State committee to examine ways of improving the effectiveness of services for children. The committee will be convened by the Minister for Social Services, it will hold its first meeting in January 1990, and report to the next Premier's conference in mid 1990.

Youth

1 January 1989: The rate of Young Homeless Allowance (YHA) was increased to $27.85 per week. (This amount has previously been reported as a sum added to the Job Search Allowance (JSA). In the last Diary it is recorded that the YHA would increase to $81.40 per week, while the JSA would be $53.55 from December 1988. The difference — $27.85 — is now recorded as the YHA.) The Austudy supplement was increased.

22 February 1989: The Minister for Social Security, the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Employment and Education Services welcomed the release of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Burdekin) Report — *Our Homeless Children*. The report will be referred

for consideration to the Youth Social Justice steering committee which was established in 1988.

15 August 1989: The Government released the publication *Towards Social Justice for Young Australians*, a 1989–90 Budget Statement, in which it details its initiatives. An additional $100 million will be spent on programs for young Australians over the next four years. Over this period $5.5 million will be used for assistance to resolve young people's problems and help them stay at home; $10 million will be used to increase medium- and long-term accommodation capacity; $17 million will be made available under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. The YHA and related Austudy payments will be increased by $7.50 in January 1990 and will be indexed annually; the waiting period for YHA will be abolished or reduced; a new independent JSA at the higher YHA level will be available for young people who have clearly established independence from their parents; the minimum rate JSA ($25 per week) will be indexed from January 1990; a $15 per week living-away from home allowance will be available for unemployed 16 and 17 year-olds who leave home to attend short training courses. Measures to improve participation in education for especially disadvantaged young people include $7.5 million over three years (with State matching funds) for government schools with low secondary retention rates and more than $2 million over two years to upgrade hostel facilities for rural secondary students living away from home. These will be complemented by a major new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy aimed at achieving equity in access and participation at all levels of education. The budget also makes provision for the upgrading of labour market assistance for long term unemployed and other disadvantaged youth. Over four years, $7 million will be available to fund innovative community-based health services for homeless young people. Twenty new Youth Access Centres (YACs) will be established to provide better access to relevant information and services.

Pension and Benefit Rates

1 January 1989: A double rate of initial special benefit is now payable to certain ex-prisoners on their release.

12 April 1989: It was announced in the April Economic Statement that by 1990 phased changes to indexation will result in pension increases being paid 12 weeks earlier than they are now. Family Allowance, Mother's/Guardian's Allowance, Child Disability Allowance, Multiple Birth Payments and Double Orphan's Pension will be indexed from January 1990 in line with Consumer Price Index rises.

19 April 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced that the next indexation of pensions and benefits will take place as scheduled in June. From 22 June 1989, the single rate of pension will increase to $258.40 per fortnight. Pensions paid to couples will increase to $430.80 per fortnight, combined. Unemployment, sickness and special benefit rates will increase as follows: unemployment and sickness benefit for single adults without children, to $241.30 per fortnight; for single adults with one child under 13, to $330.40 per fortnight; for married couples, to $430.80 combined per fortnight. Unemployment, sickness and special benefits, Job Search Allowance and Young Homeless Allowance for younger people will remain at current rates until 1 January 1990. Additional pension and benefit for children aged 13 to 15 will increase from $62 to $68.20 per fortnight in July, as announced in the April Economic Statement.

15 August 1989: Improved assistance for the older unemployed announced in the 1989–90 Budget will provide an increase of about $11 per week in unemployment, sickness and special benefit rates for single people, aged 60–64 years, who have been receiving benefit for six months or more. Detailing measures in the newly released Government document *Better Incomes: Retirement Income Policy into the Next Century*, the Minister for Social Security announced that Age Pensioners will receive a special $2 per week increase (single) or $3.20 (pensioner couples) from April 1990, to be paid on top of indexation.

13 November 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced that pension and benefit rate increases will be paid in November, four weeks earlier than previously, as the first part of the three-stage plan announced in the April Economic Statement, to bring forward indexation adjustments by a total of twelve weeks. Pensions to be paid from 23 November are as follows: maximum rate for single pensioners with no children will rise to $267.20 per fortnight; the married rate will rise to $445.50 (combined). Unemployment, sickness and special benefit to be paid from 15 November 1989 will bring the rate for a single person, 21 or over, to $249.50 per fortnight and for married couples to $445.40 per fortnight. The next indexation rise will be paid in April 1990 while the final stage of the reform will be made in September 1990. From 1991 indexation adjustments will be made in March and September of each year. Couples will be paid at the single rate of pension where one or both enter approved respite care for at least 14 days.

Entitlement to Social Security Benefits and Pensions, including Income and Assets Tests

1 January 1989: The allowable free area used in calculating the 'adjusted parental income' for parental income test purposes was increased from $16 000 to $16 950. It will be indexed annually on 1 January in each year in line with average weekly earnings.

1 February 1989: From this date people seeking to continue to receive payment of an Australian pension overseas for more than six months are required to obtain a pre-departure certificate before leaving Australia.

The unemployment benefit work test was amended. Beneficiaries may undertake certain full-time training courses and/or voluntary work approved by the Commonwealth Employment Service, for a total period of three weeks a year, without losing benefit. The waiting period for Unemployment Benefit was waived for people who, at the time of their last Unemployment Benefit payment, had been on benefit continuously for a period of 12 months and who were in receipt of Unemployment Benefit within three months of their current claim. Beneficiaries who had been on benefit for a continuous period of at least 12 months became entitled to an employment entry payment of $100 on starting full-time permanent work. The payment is also available to spouses of unemployment beneficiaries in certain conditions. These changes are associated with NEWSTART initiatives.

1 March 1989: Class A Widow's Pension and Supporting Parent's Benefit were replaced by the Sole Parent's Pension. This is now available to people with substantial care and control of a child, although not legal custody. Class C Widow's Pension was replaced by a Widowed Person's Allowance. The allowance may be granted to a person who was a married person immediately before the spouse died, and who has no qualifying child for sole parent's pension purposes. The allowance is payable for up to 12 weeks from the date of the spouse's death.

12 April 1989: It was announced in the April Economic Statement that from 1 July 1989 improved Work Test provisions will result in suspension or cancellation of benefit following CES interviews with clients who fail to comply. CES registered clients must seek/accept any part-time, casual or temporary work outside their usual occupation during the first 6 weeks. Clients will be expected to commute from one centre to another in search of work if it is usual for other workers in the same occupational group in the area to do so. From 1 September 1989 unemployment and sickness benefits will be deferred for a maximum of 4 weeks for clients receiving payments for unused annual leave. This will be on top of the usual one week waiting period.

Social Security Act amendments will be made to clarify factors constituting a de facto relationship.

19 April 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced increased allowable asset levels for the assets test for people on Unemployment Benefit, aged 25 and over, and for pensioners, to take affect in June 1989.

27 June 1989: A person having a disabled child may qualify for Child Disability Allowance where care is being provided for that child, on a daily basis, by the person's spouse.

15 August 1989: More effective administration of the unemployment benefit system and greater incentives to work were announced as part of the 1989–90 Budget. The Department of Social Security (DSS) will have better access to CES information in carrying out its review activities from January 1990. From November 1989 unemployment and sickness benefit will not be paid unless a tax file number has been supplied to DSS. Increased work test penalties will apply from November 1989 to people who move to areas of low employment opportunity, and improved procedures will be introduced for itinerants. An extra 10 mobile review teams will be added to the 19 existing teams from January 1990, focussing on those who have been receiving Unemployment Benefit for three years or more. A special mail review of all Unemployment Benefit clients after 3 months on benefit and intensive interviews for about 10 per cent of these clients will be introduced in February 1990.

From September 1990 couples receiving Unemployment Benefit will be allowed to earn an extra $15 per week from part time or casual employment, in addition to the $30 per week couples are already able to receive in extra income without affecting their benefit.

The Minister for Social Security released the Government document *Better Incomes: Retirement Income Policy in the Next Century*. Measures announced include concessional treatment under the pension income test of income received from certain sources, to allow pensioners to receive higher incomes while retaining their full pension. From November 1989 increased access to savings through home equity conversion will not count for the income test. From April 1990 provision will be made to disregard that part of the annuity payment which is a refund of the after tax purchase price and pensioners will be able to accrue more income from the earnings credit scheme. The pension income test free area will be indexed annually from July

1991 on the basis of the Consumer Price Index for the 12 months ending in March each year. The 1989–90 Budget included a Bereavement Package with provisions to improve assistance to pensioners' spouses and carers.

9 October 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced the introduction of legislation into Parliament which will provide clear guidelines to allow sole parents to show that they are not living in a de facto relationship. The sole parent pensioner will be asked to provide information to the Department of Social Security in written form. Home interviews will not be necessary in most cases.

The four week period of grace for people leaving study to register with the CES is to be removed.

December 1989: Entitlement and medical reviews will be held for people who have been on Special Benefit for one and two years. The Job Search Allowance activity test is to be improved, adopting the changes introduced for Unemployment Benefit recipients in July.

Social Security Information and Services

January 1989: The Telephone Information Program (TIP) was introduced. It is a multilingual telephone service, enabling immigrants to obtain social security information by telephone in their preferred language, using a toll-free number.

The Migrant Liaison Officer Program was introduced. Migrant Liaison Officers work with immigrant communities to develop networks through which social security information can be disseminated.

Mobile benefits delivery teams were set up.

February 1989: A promotional campaign accompanied the introduction of the labour market program, NEWSTART.

24 April 1989: The Minister for Social Security suggested that migrants use TIP to assist them with questions arising from the survey of pensioners born overseas which will check their eligibility for a foreign pension. The survey was announced in the April Economic Statement.

22 June 1989: The Minister for Social Security launched a new newspaper, *Age Pension News*, a large format broadsheet using large print, to be produced by the DSS, carrying social security information.

30 June 1989: A promotional campaign accompanied the launch of the labour market program, JET.

15 August 1989: The Minister for Social Security released *Better Incomes: Retirement Income Policy into the Next Century*, as part of the 1988–89 Budget. It includes details of a range of new and upgraded independent financial and information services to be established for pensioners. The Budget includes announcement of the National Clearinghouse on Pensioner Investment to commence operation in January 1990, coordinated by the Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association.

The Budget also provides for twenty new Youth Access Centres (YACs) to provide better access to relevant information and services.

1 November 1989: A new Financial Information Service for Pensioners (FISP), announced in the Budget, began operation. (It was officially launched by the Minister for Social Security on 8 November 1989.) In addition to supplying information about pensions and benefits, fringe benefits, income and asset tests, the pensioners earnings credit scheme, direct and managed investments as they affect pensions, benefits or tax, the service will have available information from the Australian Taxation Office so that relevant tax queries can also be answered through FISP. The Government has allocated $1 million for the expansion of financial counselling services.

Reciprocity

15 January 1989: Talks are to be held on the possibility of a reciprocal social security agreement with the Netherlands. The Minister for Social Security, announcing the talks, explained the process used by Australia in developing such agreements, stressing the importance of consultations with the Dutch community in Australia.

15 February 1989: Talks were announced with a delegation from Turkey to begin preliminary discussions about a reciprocal social security agreement.

24 February 1989: A delegation from the Department of Social Security visited Dublin to begin talks to examine the possibility of a social security agreement between Australia and Ireland.

12 April 1989: The April Economic Statement includes an announcement that the Department of Social Security will conduct a mail survey to remind pensioners born overseas that they may be eligible for a pension from their country of origin and to seek details of any pension income received from overseas.

1 September 1989: The reciprocal social security agreement with Canada came into effect.

Labour Market Programs

1 February 1989: The Government introduced the NEWSTART strategy to help people aged between 21 and 54 who have been on Unemployment Benefit for 12 months or more to get work. NEWSTART involves close co-operation between

the Department of Social Security (DSS) and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), combining transition-to-work incentives and increased labour market assistance.
March 1989: The Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program is being phased in over two years. JET is a voluntary program designed to encourage sole parent pensioners into employment by providing initiatives across three departments — DSS, DEET and the Department of Community Services and Health (DSCH). JET was launched nationally on 30 June 1989.
15 August 1989: The Minister for Social Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice, the Minister for Community Services and Health and the Minister for Employment and Education Services jointly announced in the Budget a series of pilot projects aimed at assessing the best ways of encouraging and assisting people with disabilities into the workforce, to be conducted over the next 12 months. The projects will cost about $2 million. Extra funds will also be made available to increase the recruitment of people with disabilities into the public service.
The budget also included announcement of plans to upgrade labour market assistance to long term unemployed and other disadvantaged youth. There will be a program of joint DSS/CES interviews and transition to work incentives for unemployed 16–17 year olds who are long term Job Search Allowance recipients; extension of NEWSTART to 18–20 year olds; and an extra $10 million over 4 years for a new program to help especially disadvantaged young people gain access to labour market programs.
The Government also announced labour market initiatives for job-seekers aged 55–64, to begin in January 1990. Three new interview/counselling/referral procedures involving the CES, DSS and community organisations will be trialled; access to JOBSTART, JOBTRAIN and Skillshare programs will be available for people in this age group without 6 months unemployment; more places will be provided under the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme to help older unemployed people set up their own businesses; lengthier time will be allowed in full time training, part-time or voluntary work without effect on Unemployment Benefit.

Banks Code of Operation

28 March 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced that negotiations now under way would limit rather than increase the access of financial institutions to social security payments. A Code of Conduct is expected to be finalised after a meeting between welfare, bank, credit and building society representatives in April.

7 April 1989: The Minister for Social Security welcomed the outcome of discussions on a code of operation for the social security direct deposit scheme. Financial institutions agreed to withhold no more than 10 per cent of social security payments in cases where a debt arose to the institution.

Taxation

12 April 1989: It was announced in the April Economic Statement that sole parents in the workforce will benefit from an increase in the Sole Parent Rebate in the tax system. The rebate will increase by $160 to $940 per year and will be indexed annually in line with Consumer Price Index movements. The Government announced its commitment to making the pension income test free area 100 per cent tax free. In this financial year, single pensioners will be able to earn $25 per week and not pay any tax. In July 1990, this amount will be increased to $40 per week, the same amount as the pension income test free area. For married pensioners the amount is $35 per week each. The income test free area will be indexed from July 1991 on the basis of the Consumer Price Index for the 12 months ending in March each year. The income test free area will remain tax free.
15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Budget, accompanied by the release of the document *Better Incomes: Retirement Income Policy into the Next Century*, detailed changes to allow for improved integration of the social security and taxation systems. From 1995, no age pensioner will pay any income tax, whether they receive a full or part rate pension.
30 December 1989: Special Benefit available to those severely affected by the Newcastle earthquake will be exempt from taxation for the first two weeks.

Child Support

15 April 1989: All custodial parents who have a registered court order or agreement can now use the Government's Child Support Agency to ensure regular collection of maintenance. All non-pensioners/beneficiaries who obtain an order after 15 April must either apply to the Agency for it to collect that order or notify the Agency that they wish to opt out of the Child Support Agency collection.
16 April 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced that additional legal aid funds will be made available to help custodial parents obtain maintenance orders, both through existing legal aid agencies and through other, innovative services designed for the purpose.

12 May 1989: The Government announced that the starting date of Stage 2 of the Child Support Scheme is to be postponed from 1 July 1989 to 1 October 1989 because of delays in legislative changes.

1 June 1989: Legislation to establish Stage 2 of the Child Support Scheme was introduced into Parliament today. Those to be covered are parents who have a child born on or after 1 October 1989 and parents who separate on or after that date. The scheme will replace court-based assessments with an administrative formula to determine child support amounts. The rights of parents to reach their own agreements, or to go to court, are retained. The formula is based on payment of a percentage of the non-custodial parents' income, varying according to the number of children to be supported, and calculated after taking into account the income of the custodial parent, when it is more than average weekly earnings, plus an amount for child care costs. A set amount of the income of the non-custodial parent will be 'protected' to allow for self-support and the support of children in a 'new' family. The protected amounts, or 'exemption levels' will be linked to pension amounts.

6 September 1989: A new Child Support Evaluation Advisory Group has been appointed to monitor the implementation and evaluation of Stage 2 of the Child Support Agency. It will take over the functions of the Child Support Consultative Group.

1 October 1989: The second stage of the Child Support Scheme came into force.

Fringe Benefits, Rent Assistance

13 June 1989: The maximum rate of rent assistance paid to families with dependent children or students, on pension, benefit or FAS was increased from $30 to $40 per fortnight, as was announced in the previous budget. The rent threshold, that is, the minimum amount of rent people have to pay in order to be eligible for rent assistance, was increased by $5 to $20 per week. People who acquire a right or interest in retirement village accommodation for more than the additional amount of assets a non-homeowner could have without the rate of pension being affected under the assets test, is taken to be a homeowner, and is ineligible for rent assistance. Where board or lodging is paid and the amount paid for lodging as distinct from board could not be ascertained, only two-thirds of the total amount paid will be taken to be rent for the purposes of assessing rent assistance. For ex-prisoners the waiting period for rent assistance which applies to unemployment and sickness beneficiaries without children will be waived or reduced by the length of time spent in detention.

15 August 1989: It was announced in the 1989–90 Budget that unemployment and special benefit recipients aged 60–64 years will be entitled to a Health Benefit Card providing free pharmaceuticals and telephone rental and other concessions, after 12 months on benefit. There will be immediate entitlement to rent assistance for beneficiaries without dependent children. From June 1990 those who have been receiving Unemployment Benefit or the Sole Parent Pension for 12 months or more will be entitled to fringe benefits for six months after going back into full time employment. Rent assistance will increase by $5 per week in December 1989 and by a further $5 per week in September 1990 for all categories of recipients. From March 1991 rent assistance will be indexed each 6 months.

13 November 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced increases in fringe benefit limits for pensioners to come into effect this month. For single pensioners fringe benefits will cut out when income apart from pension reaches $182 per fortnight and for married couples the limit will be $312 (combined), a rise in each case of $6.00 a person per fortnight.

Social Policy Research Centre

19 May 1989: A new agreement to provide continued funding for the University of New South Wales' Social Welfare Research Centre has been signed, the Minister for Social Security announced today. The Centre will be renamed the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) and will be funded for 5 years from January 1990.

Australian Institute of Family Studies

5 July 1989: The Minister for Social Security announced that the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) will become part of the Social Security portfolio.

Bereavement Package

15 August 1989: From January 1990 a pensioner whose pensioner spouse dies will be entitled to receive special bereavement payments for the next seven fortnightly pension paydays, set at the same total pension rate that the couple was receiving before the death. Three options will be available for method of payment, involving receiving the payment as pension or in a lump sum. The new bereavement measures will amalgamate the current Funeral Benefit and the Special Temporary Allowance. From January 1990 the estate of a single pensioner will be entitled to the next pension payment, to compensate for the absorption of Funeral Benefit. From January 1990 payments to

the carer of a severely handicapped age or invalid pensioner who receives a carer's pension will be maintained for seven paydays (14 weeks) after the death of the pensioner being cared for. Sole parent pensioners whose only qualifying child dies will similarly retain eligibility for the pension. A lump sum bereavement payment will be made to families, including sole parents, upon the death of a child for whom additional pension or benefit or Family Allowance Supplement was payable, equal to all social security payments that would otherwise have been made for that child during the 14 weeks after death.

Overpayment and Debt Recovery

September 1989: The Department of Social Security will be able to use its garnishee powers to recover overpayments earlier than previously. A portion of the overpayments may be waived if an acceptable lump sum is repaid immediately in full.

Assistance for Newcastle

30 December 1989: The acting Minister for Social Security announced that special assistance for people severely affected by the Newcastle earthquake will be made available under Social Security arrangements for natural disasters. Special Benefit will be paid to people without paid leave entitlements in certain circumstances; there will be no waiting period and the benefit is tax free for the first two weeks.

Social Security Review

During 1989, four background/discussion papers were published, titled: *Veterans of Labour, Veterans of War: Commonwealth Payments to the Aged, 1909–1987*; *My Family is Depending on Me: A Study of the Barriers to Employment Faced by Unemployed Couples with Children*; *Discouraged Workers: A Study of Long-term Unemployment and Sickness Beneficiaries Aged 45–54*; *Lone Parent — and Wage Earner? Employment Prospects of Sole Parent Pensioners*.

Community Services — 1989

Compiled by Lynn Sitsky
Social Policy Research Centre

Home and Community Care

February 1989: Production and distribution of a multi-lingual Home and Community Care (HACC) information pamphlet to encourage greater use of Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit.
22 March 1989: The Report of the First Triennial HACC Review, chaired by Dr Peter Saunders, Social Policy Research Centre, was endorsed at the Health Ministers' Conference, Burnie, Tasmania. Work is continuing on the implementation of its recommendations which were aimed at improving the program's responsiveness to clients' needs, including: restructuring of HACC Advisory Committees and the development of State Strategic Plans; the development of standards for assessment of individual needs for HACC services; and a strategy to provide equitable access for specific target groups such as Aboriginal women and women from non-English speaking backgrounds.
April 1989: Implementation of service provision and data collections and revised ADP system for HACC Program financial management.
15 August 1989: Budget for 1989–90 HACC Services, $248.9 million and HACC Allowances, $32.5 million.
25 September 1989: Work commenced at the Social Policy Research Centre on a Benchmarks Study for the Department of Community Services and Health to provide an account and critical appraisal of methodologies employed overseas and in Australia to determine appropriate benchmarks for the provision of community services for frail elderly, for people with disabilities, and for carers of both groups.

Residential Care for Older People

January 1989: New recurrent funding for nursing homes and hostels allows for greater equity and flexibility in the use of resources by proprietors and administrators and gives them the freedom to borrow funds and to use entry contributions. This will significantly enhance financial protection of service users and increase the flexibility and management responsibilities of service providers.

8 February 1989: The users' rights paper *I'm Still an Individual*, by Chris Ronalds was released. Accompanying the release there were national consultations, during February and March, comprising public meetings in capital cities, Townsville and Alice Springs, and a phone-in. In addition, 300 written submissions were received.

29 March 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced he would address the first meeting of the Hostel Outcome Standards Steering Committee. The Committee was set up to advise on standards and quality of care in aged persons' hostels, ways of monitoring standards, and means of taking effective action where standards are not met.

April 1989: The Dementia Grants Program was expanded.

3 May 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced policy on the resourcing of small nursing homes, including permanent extra funding for small homes in remote locations (redefining 'remote' as 50 km or more from an existing home by the shortest, all-weather route) and for specific groups such as ethnic groups and Aborigines. Funding included $8m towards building new facilities or expanding existing ones (including some private ones), and special financial arrangements to assist the restructuring of other small homes over a gradual transition period to January 1992.

15 June 1989: *The Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Act* was passed. This introduced improvements to planning and approval arrangements for hostels and replaced previous administrative arrangements with legislative regulations. By gazetting the maximum number of hostel places for each State and region and by using a system of Approvals-In-Principle (AIPs) for all new approvals, and re-approvals for existing hostels, better management of overall numbers of hostel places should be achieved.

June 1989: New respite care arrangements were introduced for hostels with the aim of planning respite care on a regional basis consistent with the long-term planning target. Current respite care subsidy will be paid to persons requiring respite care in hostels. Personal care subsidy plus a supplement will be paid to those requiring a higher level of care.

1 July 1989: New arrangements for nursing homes were introduced to provide and encourage increased usage of respite care to assist the frail aged to remain longer in the community. The long-term planning target is for two respite places in nursing homes per 1000 people aged 70 and over. A supplement for respite care residents in approved respite care places will be payable, linked to the standard infrastructure cost component.

July 1989: The Government allocated $2.75m over three years to develop an in-service training package designed to assist all nursing and personal care staff to meet the Government's Outcome Standards for Nursing Home Residents. Professor Alan Pearson of Deakin University's Institute of Nursing Research is developing the package and its implementation strategy.

4 July 1989: Following the paper, *I'm Still an Individual*, released in February, a final report titled *Residents' Rights in Nursing Homes and Hostels* was released. This report reflects the comments of a large cross-section of the community and confirms the findings of the first discussion paper about residents, their isolation and boredom, lack of control over their own lives, and lack of information about care and services.

11 August 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced Federal Government funding for a special Validation Therapy Project to enhance service training for nursing and personal care staff in nursing homes. An allocation was made of $77 500 for a national series of Validation Therapy workshops to be run from 2 April 1990.

15 August 1989: The Budget for 1989–90 for nursing home subsidies and domiciliary care services was announced at $1714.7 million.

4 December 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced a Federal Government grant of $114 000 in a full year with $11 000 establishment costs for a User Rights Advocacy Service to protect the rights of people in nursing homes and hostels. This is one of the first steps in implementing the recommendations of the User Rights Report.

15 December 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced grants totalling $435 193 for the renewal of equipment and for repairs and maintenance in day centres for the aged throughout Australia.

20 December 1989: Cabinet approved an allocation of $2.75m for training in non-government nursing homes following the release of the report *In-Service Training in Non-Government Nursing Homes*.

Assistance for People with Disabilities

January 1989: Training allowances for clients of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service undertaking sponsored vocational training were reduced to achieve consistency with the Department of Employment, Education and Training allowances which provide additional assistance to people with disabilities.

March 1989: Standing Committee of Social Welfare Administrators and the Council of Social

Welfare Ministers noted complexity, overlap, duplication and gaps in disability services across Australia.

12 April 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health approved a new financing strategy under the *Disability Services Act* (DSA), to commence from 1 July, after Australia-wide consultations with consumers and service providers. $15m is to be provided to bring existing services into line with the DSA. Procedures are to be developed for assessing services, and strategies devised to meet the standards of the new legislation. All grants made to new services require formal contracts with service providers, including the specification of outcomes for clients of the service.

April 1989: The first meeting of the Working Party to examine Activity Therapy Centres convened to look at issues relating to the transition of Activity Therapy Centres from 'prescribed' S.13 to 'eligible' S.10 status of the DSA. The adequacy of existing eligible service types to meet the needs of consumers was also addressed.

May 1989: Release of the report *An Investigation of the Measurable Value Provided by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service*, carried out by Dr John J. Beggs, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University. It found that the government recoups $2.25 for every dollar spent on rehabilitation in the form of income tax paid on additional income from reduced dependence on social security.

June 1989: The Office of Disability moved from Sydney to Canberra. A ten year strategic plan is being developed.

28 June 1989: The *Community Services and Health Legislation Amendment Act, No. 95 of 1989* was passed. It contained transitional funding arrangements for 38 nursing homes for people with disabilities still covered by the *Nursing Homes Assistance Act 1974*, until that Act ceases to operate after 30 June 1992.

July 1989: Introduction of the first phase of the Disability Information System for Comprehensive User Support (DISCUS): a management information system for the Disability Services Program which will give ready access to financial information, planning data and progress in the implementation of the *Disability Services Act*.

4 September 1989: Release of a report of a review commissioned by the Minister for Community Services and Health in July 1988 to examine the adequacy and effectiveness of existing services and funding arrangements for the blind. As a result of this review, orientation and mobility services for the blind and visually impaired will continue to receive Commonwealth funding under the *Disabled Services Act*.

18 October 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced special awards to be given to employers who assist people with disabilities to enter the workforce.

Services for Families with Children

1 January 1989: A new income assessment arrangement for fee relief for child care commenced.

March 1989: An Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Commercial Services was released.

Child care assistance within the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program was commenced.

April and May 1989: The Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS) program introduced five day training courses for staff in areas such as financial recording, accountability and budgeting.

26 June 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced the formation of the Children's Services Program National Advisory Committee, to advise the Minister on the provision of child care. The first meeting was held in Canberra on 27 June.

15 August 1989: The Budget for 1989–90, $239.18m, up 8.9 per cent on the previous year. It introduced increases and indexation in the fee relief system for long day care and for operating subsidies for centre, family day care and occasional care.

23 August 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs announced that Sydney's Flemington Markets were to pioneer Australia's new industry-based child care program. As part of the National Child Care Strategy the Commonwealth asked industry to contribute towards the cost of child care. Employers interested were invited to apply for Commonwealth funding to operate child care facilities for their employees. Costing will be shared three ways: users' fees in accordance with fee relief guidelines; Commonwealth fee relief up to a ceiling of $73.50 per place per week; and employer contribution to cover the balance. The cost for employers is expected to be no greater than $30 per place per week before tax, reducing to no greater than $20 per place per week after tax. The facility would be exempt from Fringe Benefit Tax.

Health — 1989

Compiled by Lynn Sitsky
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Drug Abuse Prevention

February 1989: Australia signed the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in Vienna.
March 1989: Adoption of the National Health Policy on Alcohol by the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy.
April 1989: Launch of the National Campaign Against the Misuse of Pharmaceuticals.
May 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced that the next major Drug Offensive campaign would be targeting young women and smoking with a view to reducing smoking in people aged 12–24 years.
15 August 1989: Budget for drug abuse reduction for 1989–90 $32.07m, up 12 per cent on the previous year.
15 November 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced that the New South Wales Soccer Federation was to join the Drug Offensive with a two year, $80 000 sponsorship deal.
28 December 1989: *The Smoking and Tobacco Products Advertisement (Prohibition) Act, 1989, No.181*, passed.

Environmental Health Standards

28 February 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced a grant of $880 000 breast cancer screening evaluation and cervical cancer projects over the next two years. Projects will be conducted in South Australia and New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Queensland.
8 May 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health, announced funds for medical research, including for the establishment of an environmental toxicology research unit.
May 1989: A second amendment made to the National Health and Medical Research Councils' Food Standards Code as a basis for action by States and Territories to amend their food legislation.
A draft national strategy for responding to the health implications of the greenhouse effect is being developed through the National Health and Medical Research Council. The Australian Radiation Laboratory has also developed radiometers to map solar UV radiation levels around Australia and is conducting a survey of the levels of naturally occurring radioactive gas radon in Australian homes.
June 1989: Australian Radiation Laboratory announced a national survey of mammographic equipment to assess radiation doses delivered during mammography.
National Health and Medical Research Council issued a document outlining the basis for Australia's radiation protection standards.
15 August 1989: Budget for environmental health studies for 1989–90 $6.12m, up 58.1 per cent on the previous year.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

4 April 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced the expansion of the AIDS television and cinema advertising campaign aimed at young sexually active adults.
15 August 1989: Budget for 1989–90 $105.39m, up 33.1 per cent on the previous year.
28 August 1989: Launch of national education program on AIDS targeting ethnic groups.
29 August 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health released the *National HIV/AIDS Strategy*, the Government's Policy Information Paper (White Paper) on AIDS. It has six key elements: education; prevention; treatment; care and counselling; access and participation; research; and international co-operation. Funding of $318.5m over the next four years has been provided to establish: a new National Media Campaign; a new Commonwealth AIDS prevention and education program; an increase in education and prevention funding to the States; a new Commonwealth AIDS Workforce Information, Standards and Exchange (CAWISE) Program to ensure workforce access to AIDS information; and HIV study grants to be cost-shared with the States. Other initiatives include the expansion of testing and counselling services at State level; the development of guidelines for testing patients prior to surgery; the introduction of mandatory testing for applicants for permanent residence in Australia; the establishment of anti-discriminatory legislation by the States to provide redress for HIV positive people and their families and carers; and the expansion of AIDS research and attention to legal issues.

Women's Health Policy

April 1989: National Women's Health Policy, developed by the Australian Health Ministers' Subcommittee on Women and Health, was launched by the Prime Minister. It was established as a cost-shared program with five priorities: improvement of health services for women; provision of health information for women; research and data collection on social and environmental factors affecting women's health; increasing participation of women in decision making of health and health care at all levels; and training and education of health care providers.

Aboriginal Health

22 March 1989: A joint release by the Minister for Community Services and Health and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs of the report *A National Aboriginal Health Strategy*, prepared by the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party. Action is to be taken in the areas of environmental health matters; education and training programs for aboriginal health workers; and the development of a uniform system of aboriginal health statistics.

Migrant Health

22 March 1989: The Health Ministers' Conference, Burnie, Tasmania, announced the upgrading of the migrant health screening service for TB. After voluntary registration migrants will be entitled to free screening, treatment and follow-up services within two weeks of arrival in Australia.
28 August 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced specific provisions to improve access to community and health services by people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Under the Government's Multicultural Agenda, $1.65m would be provided over three years to: implement a multicultural information strategy to improve information for ethnic communities on a range of health and community services; undertake a major study of the health status and needs of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds; and to improve levels of participation in Home and Community Care services.

Communicable Diseases

May 1989: The Communicable Diseases Committee considered the issue of immunisation against hepatitis B, and concluded there was no justification for mass immunisation in Australia.

National Better Health Program

4 October 1989: A report, *Composition of Foods, Australia*, the first national information since 1938 on the nutritional composition of Australian foods based on actual analytical work, was released.
18 October 1989: The second and final report of the National Dietary Survey of Australian School Children Aged 10–15 years was released. The survey was conducted by the Department of Community Services and Health in collaboration with the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation and financially supported by Kellogg (Australia) Pty Ltd. Risk factors such as obesity, hypertension and increased blood fat levels were identified in some children in the study.

Health Research

1 January 1989: *The Privacy Act, 1988* commenced operation and contains Information Privacy Principles governing the collection, management and use of personal information. It has potential for significant impact on medical research, especially in the field of epidemiology.
8 May 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced three-year funding of $280m for medical research (a 23 per cent increase in spending by the National Health and Medical Research Council) under the Government's Science and Technology funding package. It aims to expand general medical research; establish an environmental toxicology research unit; promote new and extra research in health problems such as asthma, menopause and hypertension; research the needs of disadvantaged groups such as aborigines; stop the 'brain-drain' of Australian researchers leaving for overseas jobs; and upgrade equipment.
29 May 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced funding of research by the National Heart Foundation to set guidelines aimed at reducing deaths of people at high risk from heart disease.
15 August 1989: The annual budget for health research was announced at $88.7 million.
5 September 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health released a report of a committee chaired by Professor Chris Selby-Smith of Monash University which reviewed the role and function of the National Health Technology Advisory Panel, established in 1982 to evaluate the high cost of health technology and advise on the requirement for such technology. It recommended an expanded role for the Panel, to include the provision of economic assessments and the consideration of workforce impact and social aspects of

new technology. It also recommended closer co-operation with overseas assessment bodies, particularly those in our geographic region.

21 December 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health and the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce announced that the role of the National Acoustic Laboratories is to be greatly expanded. The range of products and services offered will be increased and the laboratories will be managed as a modern government enterprise.

International Health

15 August 1989: Budget for 1989–90 $7.69m, an increase of 3 per cent on the previous year.

13–17 November 1989: The Ninth Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting was held in Melbourne and attended by forty Commonwealth countries. The theme of the meeting was 'Community Approaches to Health Promotion and Diseases Prevention'.

Therapeutic Goods

February 1989: An agreement was signed between Australia and Sweden for co-operation in drug regulation with an emphasis on sharing the pre-market evaluation of new drugs.

10 April 1989: Approval was given for the building of a National Biological Standards Laboratory in Symonston, ACT. Construction was to commence in July 1989.

Primary Health Care

March 1989: The Commonwealth Government and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners agreed on proposals to improve the quality of primary care provided by general practitioners. One proposal was the establishment of a vocational register, to be maintained by the Health Insurance Commission, which will require general practitioners wanting access to higher fees to undertake vocational training, continuing education and quality assurance. The proposals were referred to a Senate Select Committee.

30 August 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced that the Government had accepted all the recommendations of the Senate Select Committee on Vocational Registration of General Practitioners.

8 October 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced that general practitioners who became vocationally registered would be eligible for an 8 per cent increase in Medicare fees and rebates from 1 December over and above the 5 per cent increase for all general practitioners from 1 September. He said that general practitioners who enrolled on the register would also attract a further 3.9 per cent increase due to the fact that items in the new Medicare Benefits Schedule did not correspond exactly to items in the existing Schedule.

29 November 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health officially launched the new primary health care reforms and announced that almost 7000 general practitioners had already applied to the new scheme which took effect from 1 December.

Health Insurance

28 June 1989: *Community Services and Health Legislation Amendment Act; No. 95 of 1989* came into operation. It contained a number of changes with implications for health insurance. To protect the elderly by sharing the cost of providing hospital benefits equally between all insured persons, insurance funds with a lower than average payout for benefits over a certain level will be required to make a payment into the re-insurance pool. Assistance to those funds with above average payments will be paid from the pool.

The Act established a Private Health Insurance Administration Council to take over many of the health insurance functions of the Department of Community Services and Health.

A new pathology services table was introduced, to take effect from 1 August, saving $35m in outlays. It also made arrangements for future alterations to the table, to adequately compensate the industry while at the same time removing the potential for fraud and overservicing, identified by the Pathology Services Advisory Committee.

It established new health benefit arrangements to encourage the use of day surgery.

1 September 1989: Medicare Benefits Schedule fees (apart from pathology), increased by 5 per cent adding $191m to outlays.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

January 1989: Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal (PBRT), (at its Twelfth Inquiry), determined that remuneration to pharmacists should decrease from 1 February by 5 cents for ready prepared items and 8 cents for extemporaneously prepared items.

1 April 1989: Change from brand to generic pharmaceuticals led to a reduction in price of 73 brands and the de-listing of 12 brands with a saving of $12m in outlays.

April 1989: The PBRT released its Report on the Data Base Inquiry begun in 1988.

June 1989: After the PBRT's Thirteenth Inquiry in May and public hearing in June the Commonwealth submitted that there should be no increase in remuneration.

June 1989: The Federal Court, following an application by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, set aside the 5 and 8 cent reductions of the PBRT in January.

28 August 1989: PBRT announced a decision for a reduction of $1.05 per prescription to take effect from 1 November.

24 September 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced the eligibility criteria for the new Essential Pharmacy Allowance (EPA) to be paid to pharmacists who: are at least 10 km (by road) from the nearest approved pharmacy; have a claimable prescription volume of no more than 15 000 p.a.; and are open at least 20 hours per week. The allowance, worth around $12 000 p.a. is to be phased in over 12 months with the first installment payable to eligible pharmacists from 1 October 1989.

26 September 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced that the Federal Government and pharmaceutical wholesalers had agreed to eliminate surcharges on higher cost medications in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from 1 October. The Government agreed to increase the wholesaler's margin on PBS items above $45 by 3 per cent, from 10 per cent to 13 per cent, in return for the dropping of surcharges.

1 October 1989: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme changes due to come into effect.

5 October 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced a decision to delay an increase in the maximum patient contribution under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, from $11 to $12. This was to have been implemented on 1 October 1989, but will now take effect from 1 January 1990.

22 October 1989: The Minister for Community Services and Health announced that pharmacists would receive a flat-rate 'mark-up' averaging 53 per cent under the new arrangements for pharmacy remuneration, to take effect from 1 November. The flat-rate 'mark-up' of $4.20 would apply to all PBS items dispensed after that date and would replace the current percentage mark-up. An average payment of $4.55 per prescription would result.

2 November 1989: New PBS package arrangements for general consumers due to come into effect (pensioners and concessional users to continue as before).

17 November 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care welcomed the decision of the PBRT to bring forward its February 1990 hearing to 29 November 1989 to hear new evidence and arguments on all issues of the remuneration of pharmacists.

4 December 1989: PBRT announced its decision to hold another inquiry into percentage mark-up and a further survey of the costs of dispensing PBS medication provided that pharmacists' organisations would ensure their members' cooperation in a survey and a return to the status quo existing prior to 28 August 1989. A commitment by the major parties was requested by 20 December.

Reciprocal Health Care Arrangements

1 May 1989: A reciprocal health care arrangement was signed with Sweden to allow access to health care services for short-term visitors. Such arrangements already exist with the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Italy and Malta.

Employment and Training — 1989

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Trade Training

12 April 1989: Measures to improve equity in the trade training system were announced in the April Economic Statement and the accompanying statement 'Improving Australia's Training System'. From 1 July 1989, an additional grant of $1000 would be payable under the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-Time Training (CRAFT) to employers of apprentices assessed as disadvantaged in the labour market. This arrangement is consistent with the provisions under the Australian Traineeship System and was seen as a first step towards possible integration of the two schemes.
15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $129.7m for trade training.

Training Policy

12 April 1989: Reforms to the country's training system were outlined in a statement, 'Improving Australia's Training System' which was released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The aim of the reforms was to increase the flexibility and skills of the workforce and to open up training and job opportunities to the disadvantaged. Initiatives announced in the statement included measures: to improve equity in apprenticeships; to encourage more disadvantaged groups to enter the job market; for the development of skills and competency-based training; for curriculum development and expansion of Training Services Australia and Group Training Schemes. It was announced that the Commonwealth would consult with State/Territory Governments and industry parties on the establishment of a Tripartite National Training Board to be responsible for promoting consistent national standards and accreditation arrangements for training. The establishment of a National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition was also announced. A major theme of the statement was a concern with the quality, rather than quantity of training.

Recognition of Migrant Skills

12 April 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs announced a commitment to reform the recognition of overseas skills. Initiatives would include: establishment of a National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition in the Employment, Education and Training portfolio; administrative reforms in the Tradesmen's Rights Regulation Act; encouragement of State initiatives; and improved access to bridging and remedial education.
26 July 1989: A new advisory body, the National Advisory Committee of Skills Recognition (NACSR), was announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The Committee would work closely with State authorities, professional associations, higher education institutions and TAFE authorities to implement strategy to reform the system for recognition of skills and qualifications. NACSR would absorb the functions of the Council on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ).
3 November 1989: A detailed Ministerial statement 'Migrant Skills: Improving Recognition Processes', outlining the Government's overseas skills strategy and its importance to Australia was released by the Deputy Prime Minister on behalf of the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The strategy, to maximise the recognition of migrants' skills, would be implemented largely by the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition and overseen by NACSR. The Government would commit $7m over the following three years to the strategy in addition to its commitment of up to $2.8m in the current year to assist migrant professionals through bridging programs.

Wage Subsidy Programs

12 April 1989: It was announced in the April Economic Statement that the period for which wage subsidy was payable under JOBSTART would be reduced from 26 to 20 weeks from 1 May 1989.
15 August 1989: JOBSTART received an allocation of $84.0m in the 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget, a $15.7m increase on the 1988–89 expenditure level. The anticipated significant increase in outlays reflects increased activity under the NEW-START and JET initiatives and additional places announced in the Budget for the older unemployed.

Commonwealth Employment Service

4 May 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Minister for Employment and Education Services announced a major

restructuring of the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). The restructuring would concentrate on upgrading services to assist the young and the disadvantaged and to increase interaction with industry, especially in relation to industry training. As part of the Government's changes to labour market and training programs aimed at achieving greater participation, skills, employment and social justice, employment and training pilot projects for the unemployed over 55 years of age would be implemented; qualifying periods and eligibility criteria for the disabled and older unemployed would become more flexible; and participants in the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme would be provided with improved support. In addition, 20 new Youth Access Centres would be established, special client units will be set up in CES offices to help the especially needy in the labour market, and industry units will be established in CES offices to assist the meeting of local employment and training needs.

Australian Traineeship System

28 May 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training released the results of a survey by DEET of former trainees under the Australian Traineeship System (ATS). The survey found that 87 per cent of trainees under the ATS were in employment three months after completing their traineeship. Disadvantaged trainees (those with disabilities, migrants, Aboriginals and the long-term unemployed) demonstrated a 79 per cent employment rate. The Minister announced that the ATS trainee intake in 1990 would be 20–25 000.

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $51.6m for the Australian Traineeship System. Traineeships under the ATS were provided for 13 600 people in 1988–89. The planned figure for 1989–90 was 17 000, rising to 25 000 by 1992–93.

Employment and Training for Women

20 July 1989: *Action for Women: A National CES Strategy for Women* was released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The object of the strategy is to redress injustice and discrimination confronting women in employment and training. The strategy would aim at: the avoidance of occupational and educational stereotyping of women by the CES; the publicising of CES services benefitting women; the encouragement of women to use the CES for career and occupational information; and the raising of community and employer awareness by the CES of problems confronting women in employment, education and training.

15 December 1989: The first Annual Report of the Australian Women's Employment Strategy was released, detailing advances in women's role in the workforce, education and training. The Strategy, developed co-operatively through a nationwide working party on women in the labour market from the Department of Labour Advisory Committee and co-ordinated by the Women's Bureau outlined progress in the preceding 12 months against strategy goals. Commenting on further research into women's employment and training, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training said that industries to be studied as part of the Women's Research and Employment Initiatives Program would include clerical, tourism, hospitality, health, retail, electronics and banking.

Assistance for the Older Unemployed

15 August 1989: A package of measures to assist the older unemployed was announced in the 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget. The package, at a cost of $10m a year, included a combination of measures concerning income support and labour market programs. These include improving access to training programs by reducing the qualifying minimum period of unemployment for people aged between 55 and 64 years.

Community-based Programs

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $86.2m for Skillshare, compared to expenditure of $60.3m in 1988–89. The increase in funding reflected an increase in the take-up of Formal Training Allowance and the full-year effect of the integration of community-based functions under the Skillshare program.

Employment and Training for Aborigines

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $108.7m for Aboriginal employment and training.

Employment and Training for People with Disabilities

15 August 1989: It was announced in the 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget that a series of pilot projects investigating the best means of assisting people with disabilities into the workforce would be undertaken over the next 12 months. The

measure, at a cost of $2m in 1989–90, follows the work on disability by the Social Security Review and the Disability Task Force.

JOBTRAIN

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $105.8m for JOBTRAIN, a 28 per cent real increase over 1988–89 funding. The funding reflected increased places for groups assisted under the JET and NEWSTART initiatives and also for the older unemployed as announced in the Budget.

Social Justice Strategies

15 August 1989: The Federal Government's Strategy for Young Australians, the youth social justice strategy which was foreshadowed in October 1988, was jointly released by the Minister for Employment and Education Services, the Minister for Social Security and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice. The strategy identified a package of initiatives, costing $100m over four years, in the areas of: housing, income support, labour market assistance, education, health and access to services. With regard to labour market assistance, the initiatives included: a number of changes to the operation of Job Search Allowance, additional places for youth on labour market programs, increased co-operation between the Commonwealth Employment Service and Department of Social Security, and $10m over four years for a new program to assist disadvantaged young people gain access to labour market programs. Budgetary elements of the Strategy were set out in *Towards Social Justice for Young Australians: 1989–90 Budget Statement*.

Education — 1989

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Higher Education Contribution Scheme

1 January 1989: The Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was introduced from this date. Details of the HECS had been announced in the 1988–89 Commonwealth Budget.

Funding For Tertiary Institutions

10 February 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training made public the Government's intention to establish a special Task Force to advise it on the allocation of resources to amalgamating institutions. The Government would allocate $218m for this purpose in 1990 and 1991.

23 April 1989: The Task Force on Amalgamations in Higher Education recommended that the Government approve building and equipment projects exceeding $290m in 1990 and 1991. This would bring the capital program for 1989–91 triennium to more than $500m. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training also announced that an additional $21m would be provided to amalgamating institutions from the National Priority (Reserve) Fund.

3 May 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training said that universities and colleges would receive $3.4m as part of the expanded Higher Education Equity Program. The initiatives to increase participation in higher education of those not traditionally represented comprised three types of equity grants: assistance to institutions to trial small scale innovative initiatives into mainstream activities and to provide reduced-cost extra child care places for needy students.

Rural Education

7 April 1989: 'A Fair Go: The Federal Government's Strategy for Rural Education and Training' was launched jointly by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Minister for Primary Industry and Energy. Specific education measures announced as part of the Strategy included: establishment of eight new Distance

Education Centres; a review of agricultural and related education in universities and colleges; and modifications to programs such as Austudy and schools capital grants to better meet the special needs of rural students.

Research in Higher Education

10 April 1989: The Smith Committee Report reviewing higher education research policy was released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The Minister endorsed the two principles recognised by the Committee as paramount in determining higher education research policy: research funds should be allocated competitively, and the allocation of research funds should be based on explicit criteria, publicly advertised and applied openly and consistently. Recommendations in the Report included $65m over the following three years to higher education institutions to redress identified serious inadequacies in research infrastructure support and research training; an increase in the number and value of Commonwealth Postgraduate Research Awards; closer ties between industry and higher education institutions; and the introduction of a new funding model for the unified national system in the remainder of the 1989–91 triennium.

May 1989: Substantial increases in allocations for research and the support of postgraduate students were announced in a statement, 'Research for Australia: Higher Education's Contribution', released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The Statement, formulated in the context of the Government's more general policy statement 'Science and Technology for Australia', included the allocation of $978m over the following five years through the Australian Research Council (ARC). The allocation for the 1990–1992 higher education triennium would be $562m: $108m to develop and maintain research infrastructure in higher education institutions; $31m to the ARC over the triennium as increased support for postgraduate research students; almost $31m in 1990 to provide research scholarships; and $0.5m in 1990 for 30 industry research scholarships. The National Board of Employment, Education and Training would initiate a review of library services in colleges and universities and Postgraduate Awards would almost double in value.

14 May 1989: Grants amounting to $1.76m to establish a further ten Key Centres of Teaching and Research in universities, colleges and institutes of technology were announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Centres would be established in strategic areas such as industrial relations, materials technology, economic geology, computer science and strategic management. Each Centre would receive $176 000 for the current year and be supported for six years subject to a performance review after three years.

12 September 1989: Details of the $105m to upgrade and develop research infrastructure announced in the May statement 'Research for Australia', were released by the Acting Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The amounts allocated in 1990, 1991 and 1992 would be $25m, $37.5m, and $45m respectively. By 1992 general funding for higher education would reach $3.4bn annually with direct funding for research and research training exceeding $200m a year, a doubling of direct resources for research in only three years. Other features of the new research infrastructure program included: consideration of a new computing network linking all higher education institutions in Australia and, ultimately, with institutions overseas; and the requirement that from 1990 onwards institutions obtain not less than $5m (in dollar for dollar matching funds) from other sources.

Curriculum Development

16 April 1989: Development of a national curriculum framework was one point of agreement reached at a meeting of State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers in Hobart. With the exception of Queensland and New South Wales, Ministers agreed to establish a national curriculum company to co-operatively develop the curriculum for Australian schools. The Commonwealth would provide $15m over five years for the company.

Funding and Policy for Schools

16 April 1989: A Declaration on Schooling was signed by State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers attending an Australian Education Council meeting in Hobart. The meeting had been convened to consider issues arising from the May 1988 statement on schooling and produced a commitment to improve Australian schooling within a framework of national collaboration. This commitment entailed agreement: to develop a national curriculum framework; to improve the quality of teaching; to move towards a common school starting age; and on the adoption of Ten National Goals for Schooling.

22 June 1989: Releasing a discussion paper on the proposed funding scheme for schools after 1992, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training affirmed the Government's commitment to a needs-based funding scheme. Grant levels for the years after 1992 would be maintained at not

less than their 1992 levels in real terms. Since the introduction of the current funding scheme in 1984, Federal Government Grants to schools had increased 40 per cent in real terms. The discussion paper would provide a basis for consultation with State Governments, the non-government school sector and the Schools Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training.

General Student Assistance

16 April 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced the introduction of measures to reduce the abuse of Austudy: establishment of Benefits Control Units; the amendment of the Students Assistance Act to increase penalties; and the requirement of additional documentation from applicants. The first major activity of the Benefits Control Units, a survey of 6000 tertiary students receiving Austudy in 1988, showed over 1000 had received incorrect payments.

25 July 1989: Revised procedures for the increased monitoring of Austudy recipients were announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. These would further reduce the incidence of fraud and overpayment.

Multicultural Education

23 May 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced funding totalling $344 000 for 12 new projects under the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Supplementary Program (MACSP), a component of the Government's National Policy on Languages.

6 June 1989: Grants amounting to $9.5m to expand language education were announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training as part of the 1987 package to implement the National Policy on Languages.

18 June 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced the establishment of the Languages Institute of Australia (LIA). The Institute would be funded from the Key Centres of Teaching and Research Program, and programs of the National Policy on Languages. The Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME) had been asked to co-ordinate a review of languages in higher education which would become a project of the LIA. The Institute would offer national leadership and guidance on language education issues and practical support for language education across Australia.

10 December 1989: Details of the major review of modern language teaching in universities and colleges of advanced education, which had been foreshadowed in June, were announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The review was expected to be completed by February 1991.

Aboriginal Education

25 May 1989: The Government granted more than $1m to support Aboriginal language teaching and maintenance under the National Policy on Languages. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced 53 grants which would enable the training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to teach and maintain their languages.

15 August 1989: Establishment of an Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program was announced in the 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget as part of 'The Federal Government's Strategy for Young Australians'. The Program would commence on 1 January 1990, would replace existing Aboriginal education programs, and would aim primarily to raise current levels of Aboriginal participation in education. A supplementary aim would be to increase the involvement of Aboriginal people in educational processes as teachers and in other processes. The Budget allocated $6.4m to the Program in 1989–90.

26 October 1989: Details of a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy were announced by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Elements of the policy included: guaranteed triennial funding and measures to increase the participation of Aborigines in education as students, teachers and administrators.

Overseas Students

25 May 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training said that despite changes to overseas student policy from 1990 (whereby all overseas students, with the exception of scholarship holders, would be required to pay the full costs of their courses) exchange students on genuine reciprocal programs would be unaffected. This exception reflected the Government's belief that exchange programs should provide the same opportunities for Australian students to study overseas as for overseas students to study in Australia. The Government also would co-operate with State and Territory Governments to review the registration of organisations promoting student exchanges.

30 August 1989: New processing arrangements to ensure that bona fide overseas student applications (those having a genuine commitment to return home after studying in Australia) would be speedily processed, were announced by the Minis-

ter for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs and the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Criteria had been established for assessing the 25 000 applicants for English language courses from China. A special application fee of $160 would be levied on all private overseas students wishing to study English in Australia. From 1 January 1990 all institutions approved to teach English to overseas students would be required to have established a means of guaranteeing the provision of services for which students had paid. Those with more than 20 per cent of students overstaying visas would have their accreditation reviewed by the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

19 December 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training announced new procedures to assist overseas students. They will no longer be required pre-pay fees until they are assessed as having a good chance of being granted a visa.

22 December 1989: The Government had approached Qantas and the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (IDP) regarding the establishment of Australian Education Centres (AEC) overseas. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training said the first six were expected to open in March 1990 in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Tai Pei, and in Seoul in July that year. Japan, China and Suva were also being considered. The AECs would improve the availability of reliable information and counselling about Australian education and training opportunities.

Women in Education

21 July 1989: The first report in a Higher Education Series, to be prepared by DEET, focussing on characteristics of the higher education student population, was released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training. The report showed that for the second successive year women represented the majority in Australian higher education institutions. Enrolment of women in higher education had increased by a third in the five years to 1988, including increasing enrolments in non-traditional fields. By 1988, the number of women studying engineering had increased five-fold in a decade. Women also comprised an increasing proportion of Australia's postgraduate students.

School Retention Rates

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget provided $2m to encourage students in selected schools to complete Year 12 under the Students at Risk Program which was announced as part of 'The Federal Government's Strategy for Young Australians'.

Social Justice Strategies

15 August 1989: 'The Federal Government's Strategy for Young Australians', the youth social justice strategy which had been foreshadowed in October 1988, was jointly released by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice. The strategy identified a package of initiatives, costing $100m over four years, in the areas of housing, income support, labour market assistance, education, health and access to services. With regard to education, specific initiatives included: improvement to the administration of Austudy and Abstudy; establishment of an Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program; funding for hostels for isolated students; and development of strategies to increase the secondary retention rates of those students deemed most at risk of leaving early. Budgetary elements of the Strategy were set out in *Towards Social Justice for Young Australians: 1989–90 Budget Statement*.

Asian Studies Development

1 November 1989: The Minister for Employment, Education and Training reaffirmed the Government's strong commitment to the expansion of Asian Studies in schools and higher education institutions with the announcement of funding for a number of measures to support Asian Studies. These measures were additional to resources already provided by the Department to fund increased intakes to Asia-related courses: $2.3m in 1989, rising to $5.5m by 1992.

Environmental Education

16 November 1989: An environmental education strategy was launched by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training to encourage children to become actively involved in environmental issues at a practical level.

Family Law — 1989

Compiled by Margaret Harrison
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Spousal Maintenance

July 1989: The Family Law Council Discussion Paper on Spousal Maintenance was published.

The paper discusses the definition, functions, purposes and frequency of spousal maintenance arrangements. It was prepared because of renewed interest in the topic, in line with the move towards privatisation of post-separation support, and the requirement that maintenance and property components of orders and settlements be identified and quantified, so that pension entitlement is easily ascertainable.

The paper includes the results of several surveys into the incidence of spousal maintenance, and concludes that it is awarded rarely because, the potential payer has no means, inadequate resources are available after child maintenance is taken care of, or support is not needed after a property settlement has been made. However, different practices were identified in different Family Court registries, with Brisbane and Melbourne making non-consent orders at the rate of about 10 per month, and other states rarely making any at all.

The paper contains a useful section on the interrelationship of maintenance and property, and concludes with a series of questions on the circumstances in which spousal maintenance might be awarded.

Child Maintenance

October 1 1989: *The Child Support (Assessment) Act* came into operation, having been introduced into Federal Parliament on 1 June.

The Act applies only prospectively, in relation to children born after 30 September, their earlier born siblings, or children whose parents separated after that date.

The Act requires the Child Support Agency to assess child maintenance initially, and liability is determined by application of a formula based on the taxable income of the non-custodial parent for the financial year preceding the year of assessment. The figure so obtained is then increased by a factor reflecting inflation for the appropriate period. In some circumstances, the income of the custodial parent is also relevant.

Non-custodial parents are allowed an amount of formula free income (called the self-support component) which, if there are no new children from a subsequent relationship, is equivalent to the annual single rate of pension. The amount of the component increases considerably once there is a new child, and takes into account additional new children. There is no exemption for a step-child, and no account is taken of the fact that a new partner may be unemployed.

Once the custodian applies to the Agency the formula is applied, deducting the self-support component from the non-custodial parent's income, and applying the relevant percentage according to the number of children for whom child support is payable. These percentages range from 18 per cent for one child to 36 per cent for five or more. They are based on estimates of the costs of child-raising, with account being taken of particular expenses incurred by single parent families.

The formula operates in respect of income up to two and a half times average earnings (about $62 500 per year). The Act allows for a number of variations to the formula to cover situations where there is split or shared custody, or the children are living with someone other than the parents.

Non-pensioners may make private arrangements with the other parent by registering an agreement on child support matters with the Child Support Agency. Registration makes provisions of the agreement enforceable as if they were consent orders. Custodians in receipt of pensions may register their own agreements, but these must allow them to receive 75 per cent of their formula support figure in cash.

Appeals may be made on the ground that an incorrect assessment has been made, that administrative assessment should be departed from because of special circumstances which involve a substantial reduction in the capacity of either parent to provide proper child support; affect the cost of maintaining the child; or, where the usual assessment procedure would result in an unjust and inequitable determination.

The assessed amount of child support is reviewed each year and will vary if the taxable income on which the relevant percentage is applied varies.

Access

December 28 1989: *The Family Law Amendment Act* relating to access enforcement was assented to. It came into operation in January, 1990.

Immigration — 1989

Compiled by Elizabeth Weaver
Bureau of Immigration Research

Migration Act

31 March 1989: The Minister for Immigration announced the end of the existing points selection system for migrants in the Independent and Concessional category. A new 'floating passmark' procedure was scheduled to begin on 1 July 1989. The Minister emphasised that no applicants would be disadvantaged by the change in procedure.

19 June 1989: The *Migration Legislation Amendment Act 1989* received the Royal Assent. The Act, the Government's legislative response to the Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (CAAIP), represents the most comprehensive reform of immigration legislation in the past thirty years. The Minister stated that it is a major milestone in Australia's immigration history, removing the 'guesswork' on who could or could not enter, and stay, in Australia. The new Bill provides for Regulations which establish the criteria governing the entry to Australia of people in each visa class and introduces a statutory system for the independent review of certain migration decisions.

29 June 1989: It was announced by the Government that as from 1 July 1990, Working Holiday Makers who wish to stay on in Australia as permanent residents on occupational grounds will need to apply under the Employer Nomination Scheme category of the migration program. Up until now these intending residents applied for a Grant of Residential Status (GORS).

19 December 1989: The amended *Migration Act* and its new Regulations were implemented. The package of legislation is designed to tighten management of the immigration program and provide greater equity in reviewing migration decisions.

Citizenship

26 January 1989: The 40th anniversary of the commencement of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* — the Prime Minister wrote to every household in Australia encouraging all those eligible to acquire Australian citizenship to do so. The official launch was followed by an intensive media advertising campaign and the establishment of a 008 toll-free telephone line to answer citizenship enquiries.

Bureau of Immigration Research

1 May 1989: A Bureau of Immigration Research was created to provide an independent, objective and professional research capability. Dr John Nieuwenhuysen was appointed foundation Director. Core staffing numbers between 40 and 50 officers of the Australian Public Service will be augmented through the use of consultants, secondments from other government bodies or the private sector, or visiting academics. As well as its in-house activities, the Bureau will commission external research. A budget of $1.5m in 1989–90 and $2m in subsequent years will be available for commissioned research.

Passenger Processing

June 1989: The Immigration Records and Information System Mk2 (IRIS11), a redeveloped system aimed particularly at speeding the issuing of visitor visas, and supplying vital data about migration processing, was installed in Singapore. A further 24 installations are planned.

Immigration Policy

4 June 1989: Following unrest in China, the Government announced that citizens of the People's Republic of China who are normally resident in the Republic, but legally temporarily resident in Australia, will be permitted to remain here until 31 July 1990 on the same temporary stay basis.

Refugees

14–15 June 1989: Australia participated in the international Conference on Indochinese Refugees, held under the auspices of the UN Secretary General in Geneva, at which it joined other countries in endorsing a Comprehensive Plan of Action designed to achieve a durable solution to the problem of the Indochinese outflow.

Population Trends and Prospects

12 January 1989: Immigration is likely to contribute more to Australia's population growth than natural increase, if present immigration levels continue over the next five years. This was one of the major conclusions of *Population Trends and Prospects 1988*, an annual report prepared by the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs. The Minister, Senator Ray, said the report highlighted the continuing importance of immigration to Australia's future economic and social growth.

Migrant Services

17 January 1989: The 1988–89 Grants in Aid for Migrant Settlement Services, designed particularly to benefit women, refugee groups and isolated groups of new arrivals, were announced. The scheme helps non-Government organisations, including ethnic community groups, to set up and operate welfare-related services to assist migrant settlement in the community. In 1989 the grants were worth a total of $7.928m.

16 June 1989: The Minister announced the introduction of a new grants scheme to assist the settlement of migrants in Australia, to be called the Migrants Access Projects Scheme (MAPS) with a proposed budget of around $700 000.

26 July 1989: The Federal Government announced that it will make major improvements to the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) which provides English-language training to newly arrived migrants. Priority status within AMEP will be given to migrants for up to five years from the time of their arrival but with emphasis on opportunities to learn English in the first three years.

Recognition of Overseas Skills

13 April 1989: The Federal Government announced the beginning of major reforms to the system for assessing overseas qualifications in Australia. Responsibility for assessing overseas skills will be transferred from the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs to the Department of Employment, Education and Training and a new National Office of Overseas Skills recognition will be established.

Immigration Review Tribunal

8 September 1989: The Minister announced the foundation panel for the Immigration Review Tribunal which was established by the Government as part of its new approach to the review of immigration decisions. The Tribunal results from the *Migration Amendment Legislation Act 1989* which provided for a new two-tier mechanism for reviewing immigration decisions.

Housing — 1989

Compiled by A. Scott Lowson
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Local Government and Community Housing Program

January 1989: A major study of the Local Government and Community Housing Program, part of the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA), was completed by Purdon Associates Pty Ltd and National Shelter. The study assessed how successfully the Program met its objectives, changes to the Program arising from the Report would be implemented from 1989–90.

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Housing Access

20 February 1989: Establishment of an Advisory Committee on Housing Access was announced by the Minister for Housing and Aged Care. The Committee would examine housing access for low to middle income earners and disadvantaged groups, and was established in response to the 1988 report on housing policy from the National Committee on Non-Government Organisations for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Housing Summit

3 March 1989: A special Premier's Conference on Housing was held in Canberra. The meeting focussed on the issues of land availability, zoning and the supply of skilled labour and included a Commonwealth offer to sell a number of tracts of surplus Commonwealth land for housing.

7 June 1989: The Minister for Administrative Services announced details of the Commonwealth land offered to the States for housing as a result of discussions following the March Housing Summit.

National Housing Policy Review

1 May 1989: The first Background Paper prepared for the National Housing Policy Review, established in June 1988, was issued. Throughout the year six Background Papers were released covering: housing allowances, home ownership, the provision of private rental accommodation,

finance of public housing, home purchase assistance, and shared ownership.

Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement and Loan Council Borrowing

18 May 1989: An allocation of $1010m in Commonwealth funds for housing under the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement in 1989–90 was announced at the Premier's Conference. The Minister for Housing and Aged Care also announced proposals for major structural changes to be incorporated in a new 10-year Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. The proposed changes included: increased State contributions to match Commonwealth funds, measures to increase home ownership assistance, and establishment of a joint Commonwealth–State planning process for housing. It was agreed at the Premier's Conference that $310m under the State Government Loan Council Program be converted from loans to grants through the CSHA.

8 June 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced details of public consultations on the proposed changes to the CSHA. An information paper on the new CSHA was distributed by the Minister.

30 October 1989: Further details on the new 10-year CSHA were announced by the Minister for Housing and Aged Care. Legislation for the new Agreement would be introduced into Parliament in November.

Rental Housing Trusts Subsidy Program

May 1989: A new Commonwealth initiative to increase the stock of private rental housing was announced with the offer by the Treasurer to subsidise expansion of the Rental Property Trust in New South Wales over the five years from 1989–90. Similar offers to the other States were foreshadowed and subsequently detailed on 21 June 1989.

Homelessness

14 June 1989: Commonwealth and State Welfare Ministers agreed at a meeting in Canberra on a co-ordinated and co-operative approach to the issues raised by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into Youth Homelessness (the Burdekin Report).

15 August 1989: The 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget included a number of measures to address the issue of youth homelessness. The measures, including in 1989–90 an additional $10m for certain CSHA programs and an additional $2.5m under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, were detailed in 'The Federal Government's Strategy for Young Australians'.

6 December 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care presented the Federal Government's response to the recommendations made by the Burdekin Report.

31 December 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care, in a statement on youth homelessness, suggested a 'Community Accord' as an approach to the problem.

Aboriginal Rental Housing Program

2 August 1989: Increased funding for the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program was announced by the Minister for Housing and Aged Care. The increase would see total Program funding of $91m in 1989–90.

Crisis Accommodation Program

8 August 1989: Allocation under the CSHA of an additional $13m for the Crisis Accommodation Program was announced by the Minister for Housing and Aged Care. This would bring total funding of the Program in 1989–90 to $39m.

Mortgage Relief

15 August 1989: A one-off allocation of $14.8m to the States to provide relief for low to moderate income home purchasers who face default on their home loans was announced in the 1989–90 Commonwealth Budget. The funds would augment existing funding of the Mortgage and Rent Relief Scheme under the CSHA.

28 September 1989: The Minister for Housing and Aged Care announced details of the allocation of the additional funding for mortgage relief which had been announced in the Budget.

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List of Acronyms

AACLAME	Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education
AEC	Australian Education Centres
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Sydnrome
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIP	Approvals-In-Principle
AMEP	Adult Migrant Education Program
CAAIP	Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies
CAWISE	Commonwealth AIDS Workforce Information, Standards and Exchange
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
COPQ	Council on Overseas Professional Qualifications
CRAFT	Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-Time Training
CSHA	Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DISCUS	Disability Information System for Comprehensive User Support
DSCH	Department of Community Services and Health
DSA	*Disability Services Act*
DSS	Department of Social Security
EPA	Essential Pharmacy Allowance
FAS	Family Allowance Supplement
FISP	Financial Information Service for Pensioners
GORS	Grant of Residential Status
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
IDP	International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges
IRIS11	Immigration Records and Information System Mk2
JET	Jobs, Education and Training Program
JSA	Job Search Allowance
LIA	Langages Institute of Australia
MACS	Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services
MACSP	Multicultural and Cross-cultural Supplementary Program
MAPS	Migrants Access Projects Scheme
NACSR	National Advisory Committee of Skills Recognition
PBRT	Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
TIP	Telephone Information Program
YACs	Youth Access Centres
YHA	Young Homeless Allowance

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